

Denali National Park and Preserve

Annual Mountaineering Summary - 2010



THE DIRECTOR'S CHALLENGE

In the fall of 2009, newly appointed Director of the National Park Service Jon Jarvis challenged all NPS employees to renew our dedication to resource stewardship and focus our efforts around several core principles: community outreach, education, science-based decision making, and “greening up” our operations. While these same principles have long guided our mountaineering program, I am proud to say that we re-invigorated these efforts and lived up to the Director’s challenge in 2010. Here are a few highlights:



NPS Photo/Kent Miller

Community Outreach - We serve two communities, our local community of Talkeetna, Alaska and the international climbing community. This year, per usual, our operations relied heavily on the essential Volunteers In Parks (VIP) program, inviting climbers, medical professionals and outdoor enthusiasts from around the world to help our rangers keep the mountain clean and visitors safe. This season, we recruited locally and were fortunate to have a couple of VIPs from our own backyard of Talkeetna. We also sought VIPs from further afield with a newer piece of our outreach, the Sherpa Exchange, in which we host Nepali mountaineers who come to Denali seeking a better understanding of clean climbing practices and our search and rescue program. Whether a Himalayan Sherpa, a VIP from Germany, or a Talkeetna physician, we have found that each of these “community” members leave with a much better understanding of the mission of the NPS and in doing so, become ambassadors for the stewardship of wild places around the world.

Education— Education has always been one of the cornerstones of our program, but this year several staff took the NPS educational message to new heights. Longtime Denali Ranger Roger Robinson put extraordinary effort into organizing and leading the international ‘Exit Strategies’ conference. On behalf of the NPS, Roger partnered with active supporters of clean climbing such as the American Alpine Club, the Access Fund, Leave No Trace and many others to bring together land managers, environmental experts, and academics from around the world to share ideas and find better ways to keep our special places pristine for future generations.

Science- This season staff assisted with various research projects in an effort to let science drive our decision-making as we strive to keep the mountain environment unimpaired for future climbers. We teamed up with Alaska Pacific University researchers to study the impact of human waste on our glaciated areas. One aspect of the study looked at glacial movement, while other researchers collected snow samples at camps along the West Buttress for later laboratory testing for human impacts.

“Greening Up”- This year we did a number of things to help

reduce the environmental impact of our operation, the most noticeable being the installation of 48 solar panels atop the Talkeetna Ranger Station. Our hope is that these solar panels will generate over 30% of our annual energy use at the ranger station. Another way that we “greened up” our operation is by changing the helicopter our program uses. The new A-Star B3 helicopter

burns about 20% less fuel per hour than the former Lama, not only reducing our environmental impact but saving the program money. Furthermore, this winter we have re-vamped the way we conduct our mountain food purchasing and packaging in an effort to reduce, recycle and reuse.

With the ultimate goal of protecting both the magnificent resource and the visitor experience here at Denali, park staff is working hard this winter on several managerial issues with potential impacts for the future, the most contentious being a proposed mountaineering fee increase. A tough and complex issue, park managers seek to do what is best for all park visitors, while at the same time ensuring safety and keeping the mountaineering program intact. Denali is inviting public participation through meetings hosted in Talkeetna, Anchorage, Seattle and Denver. Another issue being addressed is an Environmental Assessment (EA) examining the ratio of private climbers to guided climbers on the mountain. Over the past decade we have seen the balance shift with an increase in the number of climbers wanting to experience Mt. McKinley with one of our six mountain guide concessions, while at the same time witnessing a gradual decline in private climbers.

On a final note I wanted to take a minute and reflect on a friend that was lost this year. As mentioned, we continued our Sherpa Exchange program and had the pleasure to welcome two accomplished Sherpas to Denali in 2010. One of the men, Chhewang Nima Sherpa lost his life in an accident while working on a Baruntse expedition this autumn. Chhewang was a wonderful human being that brought skill, graciousness and a big smile to our program.

-South District Ranger John Leonard

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2010 STATISTICAL REVIEW

DENALI QUICK FACTS

Average trip length:

17.5 days

Average trip length with summit:

18.3 days

Busiest summit days

June 20	54
June 8	40
July 4	38
May 27	36
May 29	36

Summits by month

May	226
June	370
July	74

150 women attempted Denali in 2010, comprising 12.3% of all climbers

Average age of a Denali climber:

38.1 years



NPS Photo/Kent Miller

Route	<u>Attempts</u>		<u>Summits</u>		<u>Summit</u>
	Teams	Climbers	Teams	Climbers	Rate
MT. MCKINLEY					
Cassin Ridge	11	24	7	11	46%
Czech Direct	2	4	2	4	100
Denali Diamond	1	3	1	3	100
Muldrow Glacier	1	3	0	0	0
Muldrow Traverse	2	4	1	2	50
Pioneer Ridge	1	2	0	0	0
South Face	1	3	1	3	100
West Buttress	246	1,135	168	630	56
West Buttress Traverse	2	12	0	0	0
West Rib	9	23	5	11	48
Upper West Rib	5	9	3	6	67
TOTALS	281	1,222	188	670	55%
MT. FORAKER					
New Route	1	3	1	2	100%
Sultana	2	7	1	3	43
TOTALS	3	9	2	5	56%

Top 5 Nations Represented on Denali in 2010



Statewide Distribution

AK, 146
WA, 90
CO, 83
CA, 69



THEN AND NOW: One Man's Observations

Colorado mountaineer Steve Van Meter got his first taste of Mt. McKinley in 1974 during a West Buttress climb at age 19, soon followed by an ascent of the Cassin Ridge in 1977. After taking a 33-year break from the Alaska Range, Van Meter returned to the West Buttress in June 2010, this time accompanied by his 20-year-old son Eric and friend Tom McConnell. Below, Van Meter shares some of his observations with Ranger Roger Robinson....

Hi Roger, sorry it has taken a month to get back to you with my thoughts/observations on comparing McKinley's West Buttress climb in 1974 with 2010.

First of all, the thing that sticks out the most is the number of people on the West Buttress route in 2010 compared to 1974. When we climbed as a three-some in 1974, it was us, Ray Genet's guided team, a small team of members from the US military, a team from Japan, two women from Arizona, and a team of climbers from New Mexico/Estonia that were on the West Buttress. The number of climbers on the mountain when we were there was probably around 40. We climbed in the last two weeks of June and first week of July.

Of course much of our gear was different. Lots of wool clothing, wooden snow shoes, leather double boots (one member had the white mickey mouse boots), Kelty frame packs, and 60/40 cloth wind jackets and bibs. I do recall that climbers disposal of their human waste was not well organized. At times we encountered pits that were not dug very deep and often became exposed. Same would apply to trash; we encountered more trash on the mountain in 1974. We hardly noticed any trash in



Summit Day 2010 Eric Van Meter, Steve Van Meter, Tom McConnell (Photo: Van Meter Collection)

2010. The use of the CMC's and education of climbers has made a significant difference in keeping the route clean of trash and human waste. There was also no ranger station set up at 14,200 like there is now. The only fixed rope on the

entire climb was on the headwall above 14,200. In 1974, very few teams used sleds.

During our 1974 climb, we camped below Windy Corner in what is now called the Polo Fields at around 12,800.

Many of the teams on the mountain camped here in addition to the camp at 11,200 (below Motorcycle Hill).

During our 2010 climb, we did not see any of the teams camping in the Polo Fields. Because teams used the camp in the Polo Fields in 1974, there was no need for an equipment/food cache at 13,500.

I compared some photos taken in 1974 to 2010 and noticed more exposed rocks at Windy Corner and above Denali Pass in 2010. Also, there appeared to be less snow on some of the ridges on Mt. Foraker, Mt. Crosson, Mt. Hunter and the Kahiltna Peaks in 2010. Less snow on Peters Glacier and the nearby ridges in the 2010 photo taken from above Motorcycle Hill.

Felt like the route in 2010 was safer due to the use of snow pickets on the ridge leading to 17,200, the pickets placed leading up to Denali Pass, and the pickets on the final summit ridge. Plus the route was better marked on the Kahiltna Glacier.

Great seeing you. My son enjoyed hearing us talk of old time climbs.

—Steve Van Meter

Ken Gallard, Greg Sapp, and Steve Van Meter on the summit in 1974; (Photo: Van Meter Collection)



Steve Van Meter and Ken Gallard in 1974 (Photo: Greg Sapp)



RESCUE SUMMARY - 2010

The search and rescue missions performed by Denali rangers in 2010 are summarized below. For more detailed information on these and other mountaineering missions performed in 2010, refer to *Accidents in North American Mountaineering-2011*, published by the American Alpine Club.

Fatal Climbing Fall A French mountaineer fell to his death near the top of Motorcycle Hill on the West Buttress route on May 16. The climber and his partner were unroped as they approached the feature known as 'Lunch Rocks' near 12,000 feet when he lost control of his sled. In an attempt to stop it from sliding over the ridge, the climber jumped on the sled but was unable to self-arrest and ultimately fell over 1,000 feet to a steep, crevassed section of the Peters Glacier. The park's high altitude helicopter, which was in the vicinity on a re-supply flight when the radio distress call came in, flew to the site within minutes and determined the climber had fallen into a deep crevasse. An NPS ranger was soon short-hauled into the crevasse, and although he could not safely reach the climber, it was readily determined that the climber had not survived the long fall.

HAPE After reaching 17,200 feet on the West Buttress of Mount McKinley, a client on a guided expedition began to suffer from Acute Mountain Sickness. Despite medical intervention, his symptoms continued the following day and he began to show signs of High Altitude Pulmonary Edema. At the request of his guide, NPS staff provided medical care and assistance with his descent. The patient's condition persisted at the 14,200-foot camp, requiring continued medical care. He was evacuated by NPS helicopter to Talkeetna the following day and advised to seek further professional medical care.

HAPE/HACE After a rapid ascent to the 14,200-foot camp on the West Buttress of Denali, a climber began experiencing signs and symptoms of both High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE) and High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE). Rangers were alerted to the climbers' condition by the expedition team leader. The climber was treated at the 14,200-foot NPS medical tent and evacuated via helicopter to basecamp accompanied by a Volunteer in Parks (VIP) paramedic. From basecamp, the sick climber and his attendant flew to Talkeetna on a commercial fixed wing where he was released.

Kidney Stone On May 26, 2010, a climber suffering from severe abdominal pain was air evacuated from the 7,800-foot camp on Denali's West Buttress route because of a suspected kidney stone.

Climbing Fall On May 26, a solo climber sustained an unroped fall of approximately 1,000 feet down the West Rib route of Mt. McKinley. The next day, NPS rangers flew to the scene in the high altitude helicopter and picked up the climber using a toe-in landing. He was assessed at basecamp by a NPS volunteer physician with only minor injuries, flown to Talkeetna, and released from NPS care.



(NPS Photo/Kevin Wright)

Fatal Avalanche Accident Two climbers were found dead at the base of a steep snow and ice gully in the Ruth Gorge, most likely swept and killed by a wet loose avalanche as they were descending their route. After being alerted to the incident by another climber in the area, NPS staff flew to the scene via helicopter and confirmed their deaths. Their bodies were recovered the following morning.

HAPE A climber began to experience signs and symptoms of High Altitude Pulmonary Edema after descending to high camp on Denali's West Buttress on May 29. The climber was able to descend to the 17,200-foot camp under her own power, however due to fatigue, low oxygen saturation, and difficulty breathing, she required NPS help to go any further. After being rope-assisted to 14,200 feet, the climber was evacuated via the NPS helicopter to basecamp before being medically released.

RESCUE SUMMARY, continued

Altitude Illness After a rapid ascent to 14,200 feet on the West Buttress, a climber needed NPS medical assistance due to the effects of altitude illness. After treatment at the 14,200-foot camp, the patient's condition resolved. She was released and advised to descend.

Fatal Climbing Fall A Belgian climber died from a fall on the Cassin Ridge route of Mt. McKinley on June 7. His surviving partner was assisted off the route by another expedition and was rescued three days later by the NPS contract helicopter.

Acute Mountain Sickness A guide presented to NPS rangers at the 17,200-foot camp with signs and symptoms of Acute Mountain Sickness including a strong headache, persistent vomiting, nausea, and an inability to intake food or fluids. Upon administration of oxygen, IV fluids, and several high altitude medications over a 16-hour period, NPS rangers assisted the guide to 16,200 feet, from which point he was lowered and ski-evacuated to the 14,200-foot camp. The following day he was able to descend to basecamp under his own power and return to Talkeetna.

HAPE After a rapid ascent to 17,200 feet on the West Buttress, a climber became immobile due to the effects of altitude illness. At the request of his expedition members, NPS rangers provided medical care and performed a technical lowering. The patient's condition improved at the 14,200-foot camp at which point he was released to the care of his fellow expedition members. He descended under his own power.

Chest Pain A client on a guided expedition suddenly began to experience moderate chest pain at his 11,200-foot camp. The expedition's lead guide contacted NPS staff at the 7,200-foot

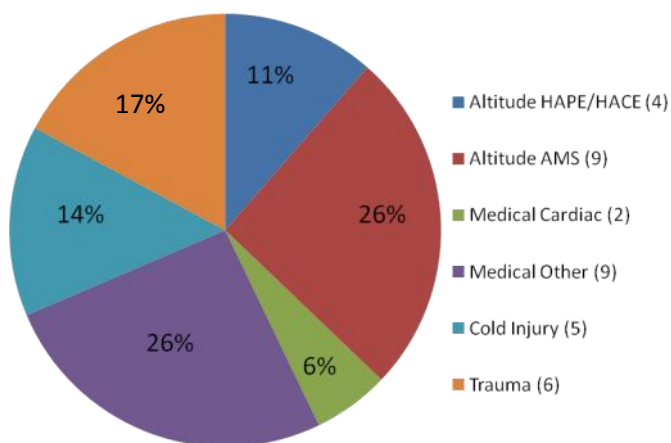
camp and requested immediate assistance. The patient was evacuated via NPS helicopter and transferred to Mat-Su Regional Medical Center via LifeMed helicopter for more definitive cardiac care.

Fractured Rib On June 28, a climber incurred a fractured rib when he fell while skiing from the base of the fixed lines on the West Buttress. Due to the potential for pneumothorax, the patient was air evacuated from the 14,200-foot ranger camp.

Mental Instability A solo climber was evacuated from the 14,200-foot camp on July 7 after his erratic behavior and alarming statements revealed signs of mental illness and a likelihood of causing serious harm to himself or others. As it was deemed unsafe to transport a mentally unstable person within the small confined cabin of the park's high altitude helicopter, Denali staff requested military assistance. An Army Chinook CH 47 helicopter from the 16th Combat Aviation Brigade transported the individual, who was strapped and secured on backboard, directly back to their base at Ft. Wainwright. At that point, Alaska State Troopers took custody of the individual and transported him to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital for evaluation.

HAPE During a guided ascent of the West Buttress, a client began to suffer from altitude illness at approximately 14,600 feet. After calling the NPS rangers, the lead guide of the expedition made the decision to escort the climber back down to the medical tent at the 14,200-foot camp. Upon continued treatment, evaluation, and monitoring of the patient by medical staff, the decision was made to fly the climber from 14,200-foot camp to basecamp where he was then released from care.

MEDICAL SUMMARY



In 2010, 35 climbers were stricken with injuries or illnesses that required medical intervention by the NPS rangers and volunteers. Acute Mountain Sickness and non-cardiac medical problems (includes gastrointestinal distress, yeast infections, hemorrhoids, etc) together accounted for over one-half of the medical responses.

(NPS Photo)



NOTABLE CLIMBS: *How Right is Light?*



Ruth Gorge (NPS Photo/Kent Miller)

This year's new route list is short and highlighted by climbs achieved carrying a minimal amount of gear. While researching for this article fellow ranger Mark Westman brought up an interesting idea "...the benefits of rest may increase the speed when moving to the point of compensating for the added weight that may slow one down."

As climbers have been pushing the limits of how quickly they can accomplish major routes, both established and new, much of their focus has been on paring down on equipment carried so that they can travel more quickly in "single push" style. At the same time equipment manufacturers have been developing gear that is lighter. Westman points out that taking minimal gear to achieve some "quality" rest on route may enhance the overall speed of the ascent. Having this gear also provides some degree of safety over the bare bones style of single pushes. In the Alaska Range where rescue is notably more difficult than other more accessible ranges in the world this approach to speed climbing should, hopefully, gain popularity.

In 2010 several new lines were completed in the Ruth Glacier area and one new route was accomplished on Mount Foraker. Renan Ozturk, Zack Smith and Freddie Wilkinson climbed "Swamp Donkey Express" (5.9+ A2+ plus some mixed climbing, 750m), on the south face of the Moose's Tooth on May 17. This outing was characterized by loose rock which has prevented this side of the tooth from garnering more attention from rock climbers. The team persisted and was able to complete their ascent in less than a day utilizing the established descent on Ham and Eggs. Plans had been laid for a more adventuresome endeavor for which the Donkey route was to be a warm up, however Mother Nature denied further climbs on this trip. For more details on this climb see <http://www.alpinist.com/doc/web10x/newswire-tooth-traverse>.

The group of Japanese climbers known as the Giri-Giri Boys was

represented this year by Ryo Masumoto, Takaai Nagato, and Kazuaki Amano. The trio continued the Giri-Giri tradition of warming up for a few weeks in the Ruth Gorge area. In April they climbed west face of Peak 7,400' and made a direct finish to a route previously climbed on the north face of Mt Church. Moving to the Kahiltna glacier in May the team acclimated on the West Buttress prior to making an eighty hour climb of the Denali Diamond. Prior to returning home one more push was in order, so it was off to the North Buttress of Hunter where they climbed for 23 hours before rappelling off. For more details see: <http://www.climbing.com/news/hotflashes/japanese-score-major-successes-in-alaska/>

Back in the Ruth, John Frieh and Dylan Johnson climbed a new variation on Mt. Bradley that connected "Season of the Sun" with the East Buttress. This accomplishment epitomized another growing trend in the Alaska Range, that of short duration trips. This team accomplished their route on Bradley and then an ascent of the Ham and Eggs route during their 5 day visit to the Ruth. <http://www.alpinist.com/doc/web10s/newswire-bradley-variation#comments>

The largest new route of the season was climbed on Mount Foraker. The international duo of Colin Haley and Bjorn-Eivind Artun climbed a previously unclimbed line to the left of the False Dawn and right of the French Ridge. Named Dracula, rated M6R AI4+ A0, the climb involved 10,400 feet of elevation gain on the southeast face of Mt. Foraker (17,400'). Haley and Artun spent a total of 37 days in the Alaska Range on this expedition. They acclimated by summitting Denali three times, twice via western routes and a third via the Cassin during which they came close to breaking the 15 hour speed record set by Mugs Stump in 1991. Their new route on Mount Foraker was climbed alpine style from June 13 to 15, following a wet week in base camp. For complete details on their trip refer to http://colinhaley.blogspot.com/2010_06_01_archive.html

Westman's insight into the question "How light is right?" comes from almost 20 years of Alaska Range experience. This year he and Jesse Huey made the fifth ascent of the Slovak route on the South Face of Denali. The full report of this climb is found here: <http://www.blackdiamondequipment.com/en-us/journal/climb/video/bd-grassroots-athlete-jesse-huey-reports-on-his-ascent-of-denali-islovak-direct-route>

Hindsight usually reveals decisions that could have been made better. The argument for speed being safety is often cited in defense of the "light is right" strategy for push style alpine climbing. It is important for climbers coming to the Alaska Range to take the time to understand the scale of their climbing objective and make strategic decisions based upon their ability, the route, and the possibility of inclement weather.

Submitted by Mountaineering Ranger Joe Reichert

MISLOW-SWANSON DENALI PRO AWARD

This year marks the twelfth season of the Mislow-Swanson Denali Pro Award program, which originated as a partnership between the National Park Service (NPS) and Pigeon Mountain Industries (PMI) to honor mountaineers who demonstrated the highest standards in the sport for safety, self-sufficiency, assisting fellow mountaineers, exemplary performance in expedition behavior, and clean climbing. Formerly known simply as the Denali Pro Award, the name of the award program now honors the memory of mountaineers John Mislow and Andrew Swanson who died in a climbing fall on the West Rib in 2009. They had won the coveted award for exemplary climbing ethics during the 2000 climbing season. The Mislow and Swanson families worked with Denali National Park to create a special donation account for contributions to the Denali Pro program in honor of the two men.

At the end of the this year's season, Denali National Park rangers selected Nancy Hansen, Felix Camire, and Doug Fulford as the 2010 Mislow-Swanson Denali Pro Award winners. Doug, Nancy, and Felix began their climbing trip on Denali as if they were at the local crag. They climbed the lower West Rib to the 14,200-foot camp on the West Buttress, back down the 7,800-foot camp to retrieve a cache and then on to the summit via the



West Buttress. Felix and Nancy went on to climb the Cassin via the Wickwire route.

Soon after their arrival at the 14,200-foot camp, a guide in camp fell victim to altitude problems at the 17,200-foot camp and needed assistance down. The trio quickly offered assistance to the NPS Rangers and were integral in the technical lowering of the patient from the top of the fixed lines at 16,200 feet.

On the Cassin, Nancy and Felix contacted a solo climber in the lower rock band who was exhausted and having difficulty finding his way. They offered to rope up with him and the three worked their way through the difficulties. As they progressed up the climb they continued to offer the occasional water or soup to the taxed soloist. After topping out on the Cassin, Felix and Nancy descended the West Buttress for the second time and returned to Talkeetna to meet up with Doug.

This team's love for the challenge of the mountains and kindness was contagious to all of those whom they came in contact with. Their willingness to always lend a hand exemplifies the spirit of the mountains.

Submitted by Mountaineering Ranger Tucker Chenoweth

EXIT STRATEGIES: Managing Human Waste in the Wild

Longtime mountaineering ranger Roger Robinson, developer of the Clean Mountain Can program on Denali, served as Conference Chairperson for "Exit Strategies: Managing Human Waste in the Wild". This international conference was hosted by the American Alpine Club at their facility in Golden, Colorado on July 30 - 31, 2010. 120 participants from 12 nations shared ideas and formulated solutions to human waste management in all realms of backcountry terrain. Topics included composting, al-



Roger Robinson explains Denali's human waste protocols (NPS Photo/Kent Miller)

pine waste systems, pack-out systems, solar drying, and cat-holing. Based on feedback from the event, Roger achieved much of what he set out to do with the conference. In a letter sent by the Director of Argentina's National Parks Administration, Claudio Chehébar, the Argentine delegate "came back very impressed by the conference, its quality, and organization. The network that is taking shape — and in which we are eager to be part of — will be of tremendous value to backcountry areas all over the world, and especially for developing countries, where there is an acute need for this kind of cooperation."

Podcasts of the various conference presentations can be downloaded via iTunes through the Exit Strategies webpage at www.americanalpineclub.org/exitstrategies. The site also features free downloads of related conference materials, as well as contact information for an Exit Strategies online discussion group.

Event sponsors included the National Park Service, U.S. Public Health Service, Bureau of Land Management, Alpine Club of Canada, Leave No Trace, U.S. Forest Service, American Mountain Guides Association, Outward Bound, the American Hiking society, the Access Fund, and the American Alpine Club.

SHERPA EXCHANGE

For the second year in a row, Denali National Park was excited to host volunteer mountaineering rangers from the Mount Everest mountain climbing community. This season Denali hosted Chhewang Nima Sherpa and Mingma Tsering Sherpa, both professional Himalayan guides from the Khumbu region of Nepal. Both arrived in Talkeetna for their Denali volunteer patrol within days of getting off Everest expeditions. Between the two men, they had 31 successful Everest summits under their belt.

At Denali, both Chhewang and Mingma served on a 30-day high mountain ranger patrol, working and training with NPS rangers Dave Weber, Joe Reichert, and other patrol volunteers to further develop technical rope rescue skills, emergency medical response, and ‘clean climbing’ techniques to put to use in a professional capacity back home in the Himalaya.

Two key partners have helped make these back-to-back Nepali educational exchanges possible. The Alex Lowe Charitable Foundation (ALCF) based in Bozeman, Montana founded the Khumbu Climbing School in 2004 with a mission to improve safety and professionalize the high altitude operations in Nepal. In 2010, another major contributor to the exchange program was one of Denali National Park’s mountain guide concessions, Alpine Ascents International. Alpine Ascents has worked with both Chhewang and Mingma on many mountaineering expeditions in the Himalaya.



Chhewang Nima Sherpa, Dave Weber, Mingma Tsering Sherpa (NPS Photo)

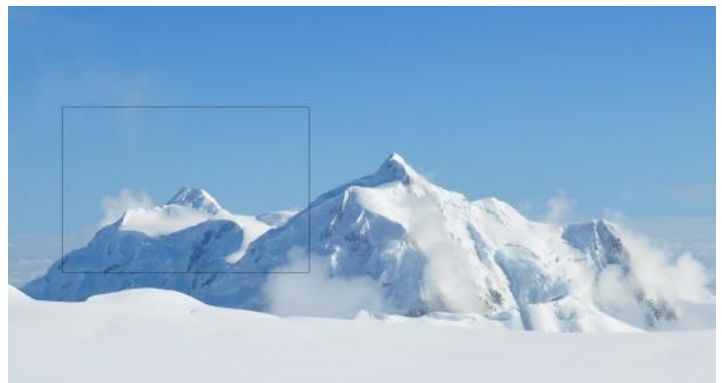
Sadly, park staff learned that Chhewang died in a climbing accident on October 23 while working in the Himalaya. For more, see the article ‘Rest in Peace’ on page 9.

MOUNT STEVENS DESIGNATED

On October 18, 2010, President Obama signed legislation honoring the late U.S. Senator Ted Stevens by designating the 13,895-foot unnamed southern peak of Mount Hunter as “Mount Stevens”. Also part of the legislation, a 8,340-square mile icefield in the Chugach National Forest now bears the name “Ted Stevens Icefield”. U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska introduced the legislation to name the peak and icefield after Stevens. Ted Stevens, the longest serving Republican senator in history, represented the State of Alaska from December 1968 to January 2009. During his tenure he played key roles in Alaskan legislation including the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Stevens died in an airplane crash near Dillingham, Alaska on August 9, 2010 while flying as a passenger to a private lodge.

In an excerpt from a speech by Vic Knox, Deputy Director for the Alaska Region of the NPS, during the Ted Stevens Day dedication ceremony, “Mount Stevens is rarely climbed. It stands as a difficult task, one where solitude is to be expected and where self reliance and a high degree of talent are expected. Those qualities remind us of the Senator himself. Not the tallest, but among the toughest, self-reliant and talented throughout his remarkable life. And it is appropriate that Mount Stevens be high in the Alaska

Range, in Denali National Park – itself an icon for Alaska. The Senator was a great supporter of national parks. As is expected across a career as long as his, there were disagreements on particular issues, but by and by the Senator and those of us proud to wear the uniform shared the belief in the mission of the national parks in Alaska: that there would be large tracts of wild land protected from the changes of human development, but open to the enjoyment by all generations, present and future.”



The Hunter massif, Mount Stevens on the left. (NPS Photo/Coley Gentzel)

2010 MOUNTAINEERING VOLUNTEERS-IN-PARKS (VIPS)

Volunteers contributed a over 10,000 work hours to the Denali mountaineering program in 2010.

Charles Arnold
James Batove
Aaron Campbell
Andrew Carlson
Brad Carpenter
Darcy Chenoweth
Mark Dalpes
David Dietzgen
Tom Ditolla
Lincoln Else
Erica Engel
Nate Friedline

Thomas Gall
Joseph Hamman
Carolyn Hope
Paula Hope
John Hovey
Jesse Huey
Jen Hunt
Mik Jedlicka
Greg Juhl
Angelika Kaunicnik
Keith Kehoe
Tyler Kellett
Douglas Krause
Greg Lamunyan
Amanda Linker
Andy Luks

Steve Lyford
Paul Marcolini
Weston Morrison
Moose Mutlow
Brian Napier
Chris Olsen
Samuel Piper
Heide Provencher
Pete Radano
Mike Raffaeli
Scott Ring
Leo Santibanez
Tom Schaefer
Emily Schmitt
Chhewang Nima Sherpa
Ningma Tshering Sherpa

Zach Springer
Cami Taysom
Lance Taysom
Ralph Tingey
Sue Wolf

In addition to VIPS, Denali staff would like to thank our military patrol members:

Air National Guard Pararescuemen

Kristofer Abel
Aaron Parcha

U.S. Army - Mountain Warfare Training Center

Dustin Dearborn
Bert Severin

REST IN PEACE

From a letter sent to fellow staff by Denali mountaineering ranger Dave Weber in October 2010:

"It is with a heavy heart that I deliver some sad news. Chhewang Nima Sherpa was killed on October 23rd while climbing Mount Baruntse in Nepal. Sources point to a cornice collapse as the cause of the accident as opposed to the avalanche that was initially reported. The accident occurred at approximately 23,000 feet while Chhewang was fixing ropes for his clients in preparation for their push toward the 23,400 foot summit. Thankfully the other guide that was working with Chhewang was unharmed during the collapse.

Rescue efforts were called off after a team spent six hours surveying the debris field from the air. The decision to suspend the search came following input from Chhewang's close friends and family members involved in the rescue. "It's impossible to get to him. The area where we believe he was swept into is a rough icy slope that is inaccessible. It's a sad decision and a sad day for us."

I am grateful to have spent a terrific month of my life with this ever-joyous

man on Denali. More important to him than having climbed Mount Everest 19 times and countless other peaks in the Himalaya, Chhewang was a proud father and husband. He was an incredibly hard worker and seized any opportunity he could to provide for his wife and two young daughters in Thame. The world is a changed place without his joyous smile.



2010 Mountaineering VIP Chhewang Nima Sherpa. (NPS Photo/Dave Weber)

I have spent the time since this tragedy reminiscing with friends and sorting through pictures from last summer. Countless stories have been retold about this amazing man. A re-occurring theme was his love of false summit photographs. It seemed like once a day he wanted me to take a picture of him posing on some non-existent summit simply for the sake of laughter. Whether it was the crevasses above basecamp, 9200 camp in a whiteout, or the bus-sized ice block by 14200 camp; it didn't seem to matter to this Himalayan superstar that we were nowhere near a peak. The above picture of his "West Rib Summit" is one of my favorite memories from our time spent peak bagging.

Rest In Peace Chhewang Nima Sherpa 2010..."

2010 SOUTH DISTRICT STAFF

South District Ranger Mountaineering Rangers

John Leonard
Tucker Chenoweth
Chris Erickson
Coley Gentzel
Matt Hendrickson
Brandon Latham
John Loomis
Joe Reichert
Roger Robinson
Mik Shain
Dave Weber
Mark Westman
Kevin Wright
Andy Hermansky
Kirt Petterson

Admin/Public Information Supervisory VUA Visitor Use Assistants

Chief of Planning Education Specialist Interpretive Ranger Interpretive SCA Maintenance*

Medical Directors

Maureen McLaughlin
Missy Smothers
Tony Hale
Bill Reynolds
Pam Robinson
Ruth Thorum
Miriam Valentine
Bob Henry
Frannie Christensen
Marla Weinstein
Jack Fickel
Cary Birdsall
Jennifer Dow, M.D.
Peter Hackett, M.D.

Helicopter Pilot Helicopter Mechanic

*SCA = Student Conservation Association Intern



NPS Photo - Lounging: M. Weinstein; Kneeling: F. Christensen, T. Chenoweth, C. Erickson, M. Hendrickson, D. Weber, J. Leonard, C. Gentzel, B. Latham; Standing: R. Thorum, P. Robinson, M. Smothers, R. Robinson, J. Loomis, K. Wright, M. Shain, M. McLaughlin, M. Westman, J. Dow, J. Reichert, A. Hermansky; On Helicopter: K. Petterson